

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending, of which Claims 2, 4, 10, 12, and 14 have been amended. Applicants have carefully considered the Application in view of the Examiner's action and, in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, respectfully request reconsideration and full allowance of all pending claims. Applicants respond to this rejection based on the telephone interview with the Examiner on July 11, 2003. Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's guidance during the telephone interview.

Applicants also note with appreciation the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter, namely, of Claims 2, 10 and 14. Claims 2, 10, and 14 are indicated to be allowable, provided that the claims are rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 2, 10, and 14 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. In response, Applicants have amended Claims 2, 10, and 14 to be in independent form and to include all of the limitations of their respective base claims. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the objection to now independent Claims 2, 10, and 14, as amended, be withdrawn.

During the telephone interview, Applicants raised the issue of whether Claims 4 and 12 may also be allowable, if rewritten in independent form. The Examiner indicated in the interview that Claims 4 and 12 are allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Examiner noted, however, that, in order to be allowable subject matter, Claim 12 must include a limitation corresponding to the limitation of "repeating the steps until all negative timing paths are identified" in Claim 2.

Claims 4 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as assertedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,405,347 to McBride (hereinafter "McBride"). In response to this rejection and based on the interview, Applicants have amended Claim 4 to be in independent form and to include all of the limitations of the base claim. Applicants have also amended Claim 12 to be in independent form and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and the limitation of "means for repeating the functions of grouping, creating, searching, generating, and determining until all negative paths are identified." Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the

rejections of Claims 4 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as assertedly being anticipated by McBride be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 11, 13, 15, and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as assertedly being anticipated by McBride. In response, Applicants respectfully submit that McBride fails to teach or suggest one of the distinguishing characteristics of Applicants' invention, namely, ***grouping timing paths that share common characteristics***, as recited in independent Claims 1 and 11.

It is asserted in the Office Action that McBride teaches this distinguishing characteristic in col. 8, lines 28-42. However, the cited portion does not teach or suggest this distinguishing characteristic. Specifically, the cited portion of McBride merely states that the electrical checker 100 obtains from the static timing analyzer 10 the number of gate-connected elements, the number of channel-connected elements, the pointers that point to each gate-connected element, and the pointers that point to each channel-connected element. Therefore, the cited portion of McBride fails to teach or suggest the aforementioned distinguishing characteristic of Applicants' invention, namely, ***grouping timing paths that share common characteristics***. No other portions of McBride teach or suggest this distinguishing characteristic. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of independent Claims 1 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as assertedly being anticipated by McBride be withdrawn.

Claims 3, 5, 6, 13, 15, and 16 depend from and further limit independent Claims 1 and 11, in a patentable sense, and, for this reason and the reasons set forth above, are also deemed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of dependent Claims 3, 5, 6, 13, 15, and 16 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as assertedly being anticipated by McBride be withdrawn, as well.

Claims 7-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as assertedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,099,584 to Arnold et al. (hereinafter "Arnold"). In response, Applicants respectfully submit that Arnold fails to teach or suggest one of the distinguishing characteristics of Applicants' invention, namely, ***reading in a list file containing unique timing paths grouped from a plurality of timing paths***, as recited in independent Claim 7.

It is asserted in the Office Action that Arnold teaches this distinguishing characteristic in Col. 1, lines 18-32. However, the cited portion does not teach or suggest this distinguishing characteristic. Specifically, the cited portion of Arnold states a general overview of timing driven layout (TDL) algorithms. Therefore, the cited portion of Arnold fails to teach or suggest the aforementioned distinguishing characteristic of Applicants' invention, namely, *reading in a list file containing unique timing paths grouped from a plurality of timing paths*. No other portions of Arnold teach or suggest this distinguishing characteristic. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of independent Claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as assertedly being anticipated by Arnold be withdrawn.

Claims 8 and 9 depend from and further limit independent Claim 7, in a patentable sense, and, for this reason and the reasons set forth above, are also deemed to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of dependent Claims 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as assertedly being anticipated by Arnold be withdrawn, as well.

Enclosed is a check in the amount of five hundred and thirty dollars (\$530.00). Four hundred twenty dollars (\$420.00) is to cover the fee for five additional independent claims in excess of three and one hundred and ten dollars (\$110.00) is for a one-month extension. Applicants do not believe any other fees are due; however, in the event that any fees are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any required fees due (other than issue fees), and to credit any overpayment made, in connection with the filing of this paper to Deposit Account No. 50-0605 of CARR LLP.

Applicants have now made an earnest attempt to place the application in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request, for the reasons set forth herein and for other reasons clearly apparent, full allowance of Claims 1-16 so that the Application may be passed to issue.

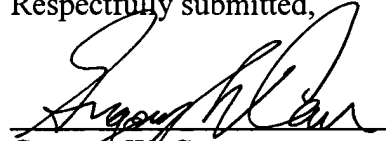
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Should the Examiner have any questions or desire clarification of any sort, or deem that any further amendment is desirable to place this application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number listed below.

Dated: 8/19/03

Respectfully submitted,

  
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